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Doubts surround legality of new temporary eviction ban

By MARK SHERMAN, JESSICA GRESKO and JOSHUA BOAK

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden may have averted a flood of evictions and solved a growing political problem when his administration reinstated a temporary ban on evictions because of the COVID-19 crisis. But he left his lawyers with legal arguments that even he acknowledges might not stand up in court. The new eviction moratorium announced Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention could run into opposition at the Supreme Court, where one justice in late June warned the administration not to act further without explicit congressional approval.

The administration is count-

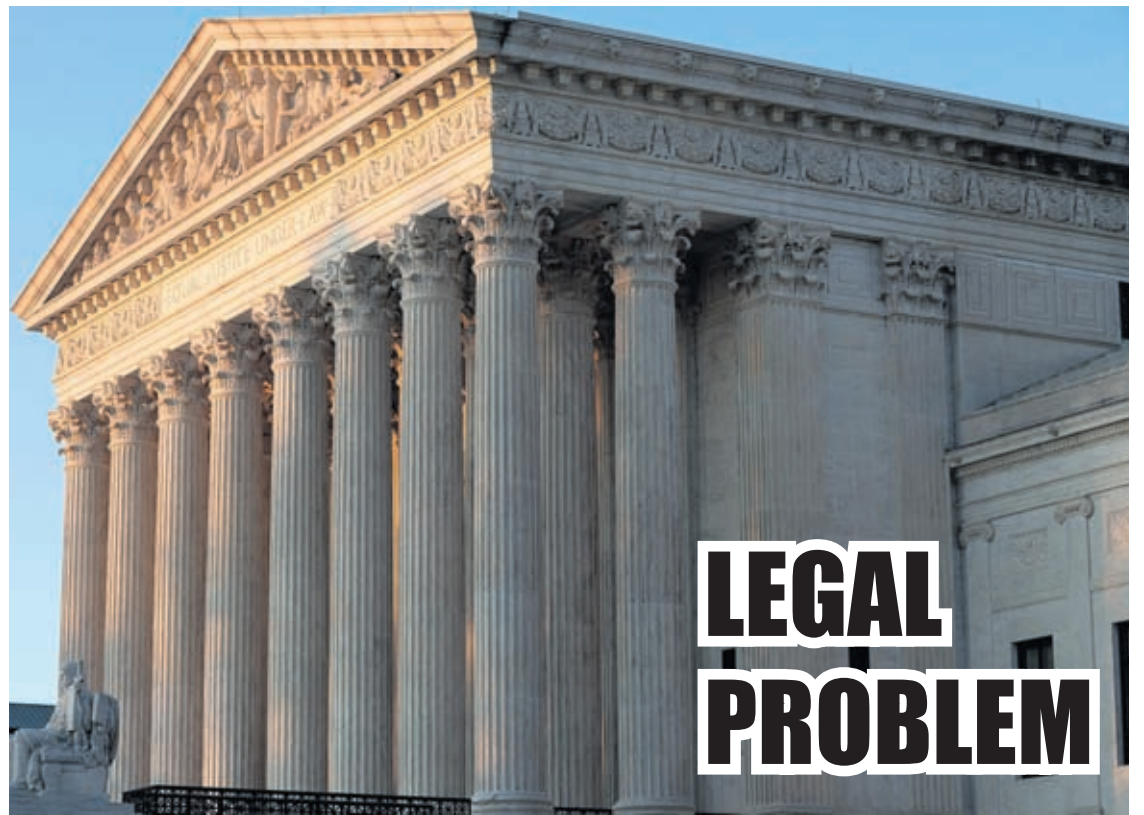
ing on differences between the new order, scheduled to last until Oct. 3, and the eviction pause that lapsed over the weekend to bolster its legal case.

At the very least, as Biden himself said, the new moratorium will buy some time to protect the estimated 3.6 million Americans who could face eviction from their homes.

Some legal scholars who doubt the new eviction ban will stand up say its legal underpinnings are strikingly similar to the old one.

"Meet the new moratorium, same as the old moratorium!" Ilya Somin, a George Mason University law professor who backed Biden over former President Donald Trump last year, wrote on Reason.com.

Continued on next page



In this Aug. 2, 2021, file photo the U.S. Supreme Court is seen on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

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Continued from Front

Nicholas Bagley, a University of Michigan law professor, said he expects landlords "all over the country to turn immediately to the courts in an effort to secure a preliminary injunction," an order that would effectively allow evictions to resume. The lawyer for Alabama landlords who took their case to the Supreme Court did not immediately respond to interview requests Wednesday from The Associated Press.

The basic legal issue is whether the CDC has the authority in the midst of a public health crises to impose a pause on evictions,

under existing federal law that dates to 1944.

U.S. District Judge Dabney Friedrich ruled in May the CDC exceeded its power under that law, a decision Bagley called "measured and sensible."

In June, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 to allow the moratorium to remain in place through the end of July, even though one justice in the majority, Brett Kavanaugh, wrote that he believed CDC lacked authority to order it. Extending the moratorium any further, Kavanaugh wrote, would be possible only with "clear and specific congressional authorization (via new leg-

islation)."

Congress has not acted. Neither the House nor Senate had the votes for a temporary extension, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi did not so much as hint Tuesday that she would try to move legislation through the House.

"Today is a day of extraordinary relief. Thanks to the leadership of President Biden, the imminent fear of eviction and being put out on the street has been lifted for countless families across America.

Help is Here!" Pelosi said in a statement.

Biden was told a new nationwide moratorium, like



Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., smile after it was announced that the Biden administration will enact a targeted nationwide eviction moratorium outside of Capitol Hill in Washington on Tuesday, August 3, 2021.

Associated Press

the one that just expired, would likely be blocked by courts, according to a senior White House official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

But the administration went ahead without Congress weighing in, after officials devised a plan with enough changes to, they hope, make it less vulnerable to court challenges. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki insisted Wednesday that Biden, who has a law degree, would not have supported it if he was uncomfortable with the legal standing or approach, despite the doubts he aired publicly a day earlier.

"This is a narrow, targeted moratorium that is different from the national moratorium. It's not an extension of that," Psaki said.

Pelosi helped recruit Harvard University Professor Emeritus Laurence Tribe to work on a solution and persuade the White House that a narrower moratorium could stand up in court, according to a person who was granted anonymity to discuss private conversations.

The new order protects renters only in parts of the country where there is significant COVID-19 transmission, though in practice it

initially covers areas where 90% of the U.S. population lives. Evictions can resume once there is a lasting reduction in new infections. The differences are significant, some legal scholars said.

"What this does is very directly link the moratorium to the control of COVID-19," said Emily Benfer, a Wake Forest law professor who studies health and housing. With all the information that is now known about the new delta variant, "the war on COVID has changed" since last time the question of the moratorium was before the Supreme Court, she said.

Brianne Gorod, of the liberal Constitutional Accountability Center, also cautioned against reading too much into Kavanaugh's one-paragraph comment on the moratorium from late June.

Courts will "consider how the spread of the delta variant and its significant transmissibility make clear the need for this more targeted moratorium," Gorod said.

Some housing advocates said the new system would be complicated but would prevent some evictions. Their clients were grateful for the reprieve. □

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Obama curtails 60th birthday bash after delta variant surge

WASHINGTON (AP) — The party for the nation's 44th president will go on, but only for family and close friends.

Former President Barack Obama has scaled back his 60th birthday bash set for this weekend at his Martha's Vineyard home off the Massachusetts coast due to the surge of infections blamed on the delta variant of the coronavirus, his office said Wednesday. Attendance is now limited to family and close friends. Published reports had said hundreds of celebrities, politicians and others were expected at Obama's sprawling house.

"This outdoor event was planned months ago in accordance with all public health guidelines and with COVID safeguards in place," Obama spokesperson Hannah Hankins said in a statement. "Due to the new spread of the delta variant over the past week, the President and Mrs. Obama have decided to significantly scale back the event to include only family and close friends."



In this Nov. 2, 2020 file photo, former President Barack Obama speaks at a rally as he campaigns for Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden at Turner Field in Atlanta. Obama has scaled down his 60th birthday bash due to the surge in the delta variant of the coronavirus.

"President Obama is appreciative of others sending their birthday wishes from afar and looks forward to seeing people soon," Hankins added.

The two-term president turned 60 on Wednesday. Some conservatives criticized the plans for a mile-

stone birthday celebration after details about the event were published this week.

"If the CDC doesn't recommend Obama cancel his birthday party, don't listen when they recommend you shut down your business," conservative activ-

ist Charlie Kirk tweeted on Monday.

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that people — including those fully vaccinated against COVID-19 — resume wearing face coverings in public indoor spaces

in areas of "substantial or high transmission" to protect against the delta variant. Some states and cities also have reinstated mask requirements as infections surge around the country.

The CDC website on Wednesday listed the rate of transmission in Dukes County, Massachusetts, which includes the island of Martha's Vineyard, as "substantial."

Massachusetts has not reinstated mask requirements, leaving those decisions to individual communities. So far, the towns on Martha's Vineyard have issued mask advisories, but no mandates.

The Biden administration has blamed the latest surge on the approximately 90 million people who remain unvaccinated.

Obama's defenders stressed that the birthday party is being held outdoors, guests were asked to provide a negative COVID-19 test result and that a coordinator had been enlisted to ensure the event followed all public health guidelines. □

Associated Press

Bill repealing Iraq war powers advances in Senate

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER

Associated Press

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted Wednesday to finally repeal two decades-old measures giving open-ended approval for military action in Iraq, an early round of action in a growing Democratic push to reclaim congressional say over U.S. military strikes and deployments.

Committee members voted 14-8, with three Republicans voting with Democrats, to repeal the 1991 measure that sanctioned the U.S.-led Gulf War to expel Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, and the 2002 measure that greenlighted the United States' 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Sen. Tim Kaine, a Virginia Democrat who sponsored the measure with Indiana Republican Sen. Todd

Young, said he was hopeful of a full Senate vote in coming weeks repealing the two measures and "formally bringing the war in Iraq to an end."

The House already has voted to repeal the 1991 and 2002 authorizations of military force in Iraq.

In testimony before the committee Tuesday, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman encouraged repeal of the 2002 measure. Ending the war authorization against Saddam's Iraq made clear that the Iraq government of today was a partner of the United States, and removed a grievance for rival Iran to exploit, Sherman said.

But Republican opponents argued that revoking the two authorizations for military force signaled U.S. weakness to Iran at a time when the Biden administration was formally ending

its combat role in both Iraq and Afghanistan and negotiating to reenter a nuclear deal with Iran.

"The ayatollah is listening to this debate," Sen. Ted Cruz, a Texas Republican, said of Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Cruz, a 2016 presidential candidate, has repeatedly tried to depict President Joe Biden as weak on Iran. "The ayatollah is listening to what's happening. We've seen him testing the Biden administration over and over and over again."

Republicans also pointed out that President Donald Trump's administration had cited the 2002 Iraq war resolution as part of its legal justification for a 2020 U.S. drone strike that killed Iranian Gen. Qassim Soleimani. Top lawyers for the State Department and Pentagon told committee members on Tuesday that the Biden



Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, from left, Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., and Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, meet on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021.

Associated Press

administration believes it has adequate legal authority for any similar strike, even with repeal of the Iraq war measures.

Wednesday's vote comes in a growing tug-of-war over Congress' and the executive branch's constitutionally granted author-

ity over U.S. military force. Democrats say Biden's administration is only the latest to sidestep seeking approval from Congress before carrying out airstrikes this year against al-Qaida allied insurgents in Somalia and Iran-backed militias on the Iraq-Syria border. □

School masks, state worker vaccinations required in Illinois

By **JOHN O'CONNOR**

AP Political Writer

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—Gov.

J.B. Pritzker on Wednesday ordered face coverings for all school children from pre-school through 12th grade to thwart the continued spread of the COVID-19 virus. The Democratic governor also said he will require all state employees who work in highly populated facilities such as prisons to be vaccinated.

With the potentially deadly virus continuing to spread, worsened by the more virulent delta variant, Pritzker urged residents who have not been vaccinated to get the shots necessary to prevent the illness and its spread.

"Every time we think we know where this virus is headed, it changes, and it shifts..." Pritzker said in Chicago. "I want to say this, specifically to young adults: Please do not think that the worst-case scenario can't happen to you. It can happen. It is happening. Get vaccinated."

The required vaccination for state employees applies to those who work in prisons and juvenile detention facilities, veterans' homes and state facilities for the mentally and developmentally disabled. Each must be fully vaccinated by Oct. 4.

Employers both private and



Gov. J.B. Pritzker speaks about new mask mandates for schools, state employees and long term care facilities during a press conference at the Thompson Center, Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021 in Chicago.

Associated Press

public have begun requiring shots against the deadly virus — President Joe Biden is considering such a requirement for all federal employees — and the law appears to be on the side of the boss. Employers can make vaccination a condition of employment, experts say.

Roberta Lynch, executive director of Council 31 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which represents most of those affected by the vaccination order, said those work-

ers have been reporting to work since the beginning of the pandemic "putting their own health and safety at risk to assure public safety and provide essential care."

Lynch said the union is prepared to discuss parameters with the Pritzker administration "to ensure fairness for employees while safeguarding the health of staff and all those who reside in these facilities."

While the debate over vaccines has caused deep divisions nationally, face coverings have lit an even

shorter fuse. They are an aegis against transmission for some, an unwelcome and unjust intrusion for others, with local school boards the latest battleground. The state's largest teachers' union, the Illinois Education Association, issued a statement indicating its agreement with the governor's action.

"Let's pull together and take care of one another. Vax up and mask up. We owe it to our students and we owe it to each other," said Kathi Griffin, president of the Illinois Education As-

sociation. "We're so thankful to have leadership in this state that won't let the virus fester and grow. But, it is up to all of us to bring COVID-19 to its knees."

School safety was paramount last winter when Chicago public school teachers threatened to walk out before Mayor Lori Lightfoot negotiated safety protocols before students returned for in-person learning.

Republicans, as they have since the early day of Pritzker's involvement in stemming the pandemic, continued to criticize the governor's unilateral approach to mitigation of the virus' impact. Senate GOP Leader Dan McConchie of the Chicago suburb of Hawthorn Woods used Pritzker's "All In Illinois" COVID-19 mantra in his critique.

"He himself refuses to be 'all in' with state and local elected officials who better understand their geographic areas and their communities' needs," McConchie said in a statement. "If he really wants to achieve the best possible mitigation results, he would abandon this singular approach and instead bring others to the governing table to ensure that mitigation efforts will be broadly accepted by the populace and effectively implemented." □

U.S. plans to require COVID-19 shots for foreign travelers



President Joe Biden tours Plumbers & Gasfitters Local 5 Training Facility in Lanham, Md., Wednesday, Aug 4, 2021.

Associated Press

By **ZEKE MILLER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The

Biden administration is taking the first steps toward requiring nearly all foreign

visitors to the U.S. to be vaccinated for the coronavirus, a White House official said Wednesday.

The requirement would come as part of the administration's phased approach to easing travel restrictions for foreign citizens to the country. No timeline has yet been determined, as interagency working groups study how and when to safely move toward resuming normal travel. Eventually all foreign citizens entering the country, with some limited exceptions, are expected to need to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to enter

the U.S.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the policy under development.

The Biden administration has kept in place travel restrictions that have severely curtailed international trips to the U.S., citing the spread of the delta variant of the virus. Under the rules, non-U.S. residents who have been to China, the European Schengen area, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Brazil, South Africa and India in the prior 14 days are prohibited from entering the U.S.

All travelers to the U.S., re-

gardless of vaccination status, are required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within three days of air travel to the country.

The Biden administration has faced pressure to lift some restrictions from affected allies, the air travel industry and families who have been kept separated from loved ones by the rules. Many have complained that the travel restrictions don't reflect the current virus situation — particularly as caseloads in the U.S. are worse than in many of the prohibited nations. □

Head of U.N. health agency seeks vaccine booster moratorium

GENEVA (AP) — The head of the World Health Organization called Wednesday for a moratorium on administering booster shots of COVID-19 vaccines as a way to help ensure that doses are available in countries where few people have received their first shots.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus made the appeal mostly to wealthier countries that have far outpaced the developing world in numbers of vaccinations. He said richer countries have administered about 100 doses of coronavirus vaccines for every 100 people on average, while low-income countries — hampered by short supplies — have provided only about 1.5 doses per 100 people.

WHO officials say the science is unproven about whether giving booster shots to people who have already received two vaccine doses is effective in preventing the spread of the coronavirus.

The U.N. health agency has repeatedly called for rich countries to do more to help improve access to vaccines in the developing world. It has argued that no one is safe until everyone is safe because the longer and more widely the



In this file photo dated Tuesday, July 14, 2020, Director General of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, attends the Bastille Day military parade, in Paris.

Associated Press

coronavirus circulates, the greater the chance that new variants could emerge — and prolong a global crisis in fighting the pandemic. The agency has no power to require countries to act, and many in the past have ignored its appeals on issues like donating vaccines, limiting cross-border travel and taking steps to boost production of vaccines in developing coun-

tries.

Tedros pointed to a WHO target he had announced in May seeking to ensure that 10% of the populations in all countries receive vaccines against the coronavirus.

"Accordingly, WHO is calling for a moratorium on boosters until at least the end of September to enable at least 10% of the population of every coun-

try to be vaccinated," he told a news conference.

To help take the heat out of the pandemic, WHO has been focusing on getting vaccines to older adults, health care workers and other target populations in many countries before booster shot campaigns are carried out.

Dr. Bruce Aylward, a special adviser to Tedros, said the moratorium was about

an appeal to countries considering booster doses to "put a hold" on such policies "until and unless we get the rest of the world caught up" in the fight against the pandemic.

"As we've seen from the emergence of variant after variant, we cannot get out of it unless the whole world gets out of it together. And with the huge disparity in vaccination coverage, we're simply not going to be able to achieve that," Aylward said.

Israel, France, Germany and many Middle Eastern countries have already started administering boosters, and other nations, including the United States and Britain, are considering plans to do so in the wake of the emergence of the highly transmissible delta variant.

Dr. Katherine O'Brien, WHO's vaccines chief, noted that a "very limited number" of countries were giving booster doses though a larger number were contemplating it.

"The evidence is evolving. It's moving. We don't have a full set of evidence around whether this is needed or not," O'Brien said, adding that the main message was that "we need instead to focus on those people who are most vulnerable." □

Germany giving over \$40 million to fight anti-Semitism

BERLIN (AP) — The German government said Wednesday it will strengthen its battle against the quickly growing antisemitism in the country by investing 35 million euros (\$41.5 million) into research and educational projects focused on understanding its causes and effectively fighting hatred of Jews.

Police registered 2,351 cases of antisemitism in Germany last year, which was an increase of 15% compared to the year before, officials reported.

"This is the highest number in the last couple of years," German Education and Research Minister Anja Karliczek said. "There's reason for

worry that this is only the tip of the iceberg and that the unreported number of daily attacks on Jews is substantially higher."

Karliczek said that the government wants to invest millions into researching the causes of antisemitism "because we need deep knowledge in order to be able to efficiently fight" it. She said millions would be given to universities to examine the different facets of hatred against Jews and to develop strategies on what to best do against it. Various projects will focus on antisemitism in schools, in the German justice system or on the internet and social media.

Funds will also be given to hire junior scholars focusing on the topic and to support projects trying to educate the non-Jewish majority in the country about Jewish life, customs and religious rituals. In a second step, scientists will be tasked to develop practical guidelines based on their findings to help teachers and others tackle the growing hatred. "It is a shame that Jews feel threatened in our country," the minister said. "Especially in view of our history, we have a special obligation to protect Jews and Jewish life in Germany."

Six million European Jews were killed in the Holocaust, the German-orchestrated



Anja Karliczek (CDU), Federal Minister of Education and Research, speaks during a press conference on the state of research against anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism side by side in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021.

Associated Press

genocide during World War II. □

Airstrikes pummel Taliban positions in southern Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — U.S. and Afghan airstrikes hit Taliban targets overnight in southern Helmand province in an effort to dislodge the insurgents after they captured much of the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, officials said Wednesday.

The United Nations and Human Rights Watch asked both sides to take care to prevent civilian casualties as the fighting rages on. The Taliban have waged a fierce push over the past months as U.S. and NATO forces complete their pull-out from the war-torn country. They have taken large swaths of land and have now turned their guns on larger urban centers.

Ghulam Wali Afghan, a lawmaker from Helmand, told The Associated Press that his relatives and constituents in Lashkar Gah have told him of bodies in the streets and residents hiding inside their homes, too afraid to venture out and collect the dead.

After a night of heavy airstrikes, the Defense Ministry said Wednesday that the Taliban have suffered heavy losses in Lashkar



Afghan Special forces patrol a deserted street during fighting with Taliban fighters, in Lashkar Gah, Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021.

Associated Press

Gah, though there was no immediate way to confirm that statement. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denied the losses.

The authorities did not say whether Afghan forces have retaken back territory. On Tuesday, residents and officials had said the Taliban control nine out of 10 districts in the city.

The fall of Lashkar Gah

would be a major turning point in the Taliban offensive and it would also be the first provincial capital to be captured by the insurgents in several years. The fighting this week has kept residents of Lashkar Gah trapped and hunkered down inside their homes.

On Wednesday, the province's hospital chief, Sher Ali Shakir, urged people to

remain in their houses, saying that in past 24 hours at least seven civilians were killed and 101 were wounded. Most of the injuries were bullet wounds, he said.

The airstrikes late Tuesday and ongoing street battles in Lashkar Gah have destroyed several houses and markets. The Helmand provincial council chief, Attaullah Afghan, charged

both sides with ignoring the safety of civilians.

Earlier Tuesday, a dramatic call for people to evacuate the neighborhoods captured by the Taliban came from the Afghan forces' commander for Helmand, Gen. Sami Sadat, who in an audio message shared with journalists asked the residents for forgiveness for the hardship they are going through.

"We will not leave the Taliban alive, Sadat said. "I know it's hard ... we do it for your future. Forgive us if you get displaced for few days, please evacuate as soon as possible."

Lashkar Gah is one of three provincial capitals under siege by the Taliban as they stepped up their onslaught against government forces. The push on the cities came after the Taliban swept through dozens of districts across the country, many in remote and rural, sparsely populated areas. Along with Lashkar Gah, the provincial capitals of Herat, in western Herat province, and Kandahar, in southern Kandahar province have also been under Taliban attack. □

Guatemala draws fire for new anti-corruption prosecutor



A child wearing a Guy Fawkes' mask often linked to popular movements stands on a stage during a rally to pressure Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei to resign, in Guatemala City, Saturday, July 31, 2021.

Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Guatemala named a new anti-corruption prosecutor Tuesday, two weeks after the previous one was fired and fled the country, citing fears for his safety. Attorney General Consuelo

Porras named Rafael Curruchiche as the new prosecutor. Curruchiche is considered to be one of Porras' inner circle and has himself been questioned for allegedly protecting businessmen accused of illegal

campaign contributions from prosecution.

His appointment seemed unlikely to quell international criticism or calm street protests against corruption following the departure of former anti-corruption prosecutor Juan Francisco Sandoval.

Edie Cux of the transparency group Citizen Action said Curruchiche was the wrong person for the job.

"He is someone who does not have the knowledge or ability" to run the country's top anti-corruption office, Cux said. "Moreover, he has a history of not being an independent prosecutor."

The firing of Sandoval in July lead the United States to say it had lost confidence in Guatemala's commitment to battling corruption. The U.S. government temporarily

suspended cooperation with Porras' office.

Thousands of Guatemalans took to the streets in protest Thursday, blocking highways and calling for a national strike over the government's apparent unwillingness to tackle corruption.

President Alejandro Giammattei has previously spoken of his friendship with Porras, who was appointed by his predecessor, President Jimmy Morales.

Sandoval said after his firing that as his investigations got closer to Giammattei and members of his Cabinet, Porras made efforts to block him. Porras said she fired him because his investigations were ideologically biased.

Sandoval's office was a critical remaining piece of Guatemala's anti-corruption

efforts. In 2019, the Morales forced out the United Nations' anti-corruption mission, which had worked closely with Sandoval's office to dismantle graft networks.

On Thursday, Giammattei expressed his concern that the suspension in U.S. cooperation would be "counterproductive" because it would affect the countries' common goals of fighting organized crime and corruption. He said he had asked the finance minister to look for budget support and called on "friendly countries" to help keep efforts from being diminished. Eleven opposition lawmakers sent a letter to Porras asking her to resign over Sandoval's firing. "You are no longer independent nor ideal to continue in the position," the letter said. □

Mexico sues U.S. gun manufacturers over arms trafficking toll

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The Mexican government sued United States gun manufacturers and distributors Wednesday in U.S. federal court, arguing that their negligent and illegal commercial practices have unleashed tremendous bloodshed in Mexico. The unusual lawsuit was filed in U.S. federal court in Boston. Among those being sued are some of the biggest names in guns, including: Smith & Wesson Brands, Inc.; Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc.; Beretta U.S.A. Corp.; Colt's Manufacturing Company LLC, and Glock Inc. Another defendant is Interstate Arms, a Boston-area wholesaler that sells guns from all but one of the named manufacturers to dealers around the U.S.

The manufacturers did not immediately answer requests for comment.

The Mexican government argues that the companies know that their practices contribute to the trafficking of guns to Mexico and facilitate it. Mexico wants compensation for the havoc the guns have wrought in its country.

The Mexican government "brings this action to put an end to the massive damage that the Defendants cause by actively facilitating the unlawful trafficking of their guns to drug cartels and other criminals in Mexico," the lawsuit said.

The government estimates that 70% of the weapons trafficked to Mexico come from the U.S., according to the Foreign Affairs Ministry. And that in 2019 alone, at least 17,000 homicides were linked to trafficked weapons.

Alejandro Celorio, legal advisor for the ministry, told reporters Wednesday that the damage caused by the trafficked guns would



In this Jan. 19, 2016, file photo, handguns are displayed at the Smith & Wesson booth at the Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show in Las Vegas.

be equal to 1.7% to 2% of Mexico's gross domestic product. The government will seek at least \$10 billion in compensation, he said. Mexico's GDP last year was more than \$1.2 trillion.

"We don't do it to pressure the United States," Celorio said. "We do it so there aren't deaths in Mexico." Ebrard said the lawsuit was another piece of the government's efforts against guns. "The priority is that we reduce homicides," he said. "We aren't looking to change American laws." Mexico did not seek the advice of the U.S. government on the matter, but advised the U.S. Embassy before filing the lawsuit.

Steve Shadowen, the lead attorney representing Mexico, said that in the early 2000s about 30 U.S. cities brought similar litigation against gun manufacturers arguing that they should be

responsible for increased police, hospitalization and other costs associated with gun violence.

As some cities started winning, gun manufacturers went to Congress and got an immunity statute for the manufacturers. Shadowen said he believes that immunity doesn't apply when the injury occurs outside the United States.

"The merits of the case are strongly in our favor and then we have to get around this immunity statute which we think we're going to win," he said. "That statute just simply doesn't apply. It only applies when you're in the United States." He said he believes it is the first time a foreign government has sued the gun manufacturers.

The sale of firearms is severely restricted in Mexico and controlled by the Defense Department. But

last year, and the toll has remained stubbornly high despite President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's pledge to pacify the country. Mexico's nationwide murder rate in 2020 remained unchanged at 29 per 100,000 inhabitants. By comparison, the U.S. homicide rate in 2019 was 5.8 per 100,000.

In August 2019, a gunman killed 23 people in an El Paso Walmart, including some Mexican citizens. At that time, Foreign Affairs Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said the government would explore its legal options. The government said Wednesday that recent rulings in U.S. courts contributed to its decision to file the lawsuit. It cited a decision in California allowing a lawsuit against Smith & Wesson to move forward, a lawsuit filed last week against Century Arms related to a 2019 shooting in Gilroy, California, and the \$33 million settlement reached by Remington with some of the families whose children were killed in the Newtown, Connecticut, mass school shooting. □

Associated Press

thousands of guns are smuggled into Mexico by the country's powerful drug cartels.

There were more than 36,000 murders in Mexico

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LOCAL



Eight cruise ships scheduled for August 2021

ORANJESTAD - The cruise industry is getting back on its feet, and this will be seen in Aruba as well, as there are eight port visits scheduled for Aruba in August.

Compared to last month, it entails a gradual increase. In June 2021, the very first

Cruise ship arrived in March 2020. The Port of Aruba did not receive any Cruise ships for 15 months due to the global pandemic. The Government makes its maximum effort to bring back cruise tourism to Aruba. The Minister of Tourism, APA, and the ATA, pro-

actively approached the cruise lines and explained the situation in Aruba. They also shared the safety protocols with the cruise lines. Aruba was the first destination for cruise ships and this helps Aruba recover its cruise tourism. A flourishing cruise industry will bring

opportunities for the economy, will generate employment for tour operators, taxis, restaurants, etc. Similar to stay-over tourism, cruise tourism will also see a gradual increase projected by the APA. For the remainder of 2021, there are 24 more calls



scheduled for Carnival Horizon. There are a total of 69 anticipated calls for 2021 for the two cruise companies, Royal Caribbean's Celebrity and Carnival Cruise Lines. □

Aruba's Cruise Port

ORANJESTAD — The port of Oranjestad, is situated on the south-western end of the island. The port is open for day and night navigation, allowing vessels to enter and leave at any hour. It is located along the waters edge of the capital, Oranjestad, which makes a colorful sight upon entering of the harbor. The ships moor within walking distance from the shopping centers, a 10 minute drive from the beaches, and a little over 2 miles from the international airport.

In 1955, when the first cruise ship (the Tradewinds) to call in Aruba docked in Oranjestad, it brought the town to a halt as people came to view the strange site. Today, cruise ships are an almost weekly sight.

Located in Oranjestad next to the town's business district, the cruise port is capable of accommodating several



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large ships at a time and often does so. The cruise terminal is a large metal building painted in pastel colors. Inside are stalls operated by local merchants. On the other side of the cruise terminal is a large parking area. It is here where passengers board their shore excursion coaches. Taxis and vendors offering tours can also usually be found in this area.

When there are too many cruise ships in port to be accommodated next to the cruise terminal, ships are docked at the adjoining cargo piers. There is usually a shuttle bus to take passengers to and from the main gate. However, many guests walk to the gate.

If you are limiting your stay in Aruba to shopping and seeing the sights of Oranjestad, the best way of getting around is on foot. All of the shops and sights are within walking distance of

the cruise terminal. Traffic in the town can get quite busy so be careful crossing the streets.

Most passengers elect to go beyond Oranjestad. One popular thing to do is going to the beach, such as eagle Beach, Palm Beach, or baby Beach. There are many ways to get around and explore the island. Perhaps take a taxi. All taxis have "TX" in their license plate number and prices are fixed. You will also find many entrepreneurs at the cruise port selling tours and transportation in buses or vans. All sorts of vehicles are used for tours and shore excursions including all-terrain vehicles and safari trucks. Cars, scooters and all-terrain vehicles can be rented or just take the public bus service. Its terminal is across the main street from the entrance to the cruise port.

Source: beyondships3.com

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Radisson Blu offers more than most standard rooms, you feel you are renting a condominium with the luxury services of a hotel. On your way to the suite the resort shows you already the attention to details: the elevator space is upgraded with corners of huge bamboo poles and trendy light bulbs incorporated in a wall of

wooded decoration. The hallways are high and spacious taking you to the hip suite where the design is white with light wood to provide a luxury, contemporary ambiance. The suite's kitchen is fully equipped with an oven, dishwasher and kitchenware, a big family table ready to invite you to family breakfast or a friends gathering. You feel great, the white interior even accentuates the bright-blue ocean in front of you: inhale this Zen moment from your spacious balcony.

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Water wellness

Imagine to wake up in your spacious, stylish suite and after some yawning and stretching you enjoy a cup of Joe on your balcony where your eye catches the huge pool below. This is very inviting and your body needs this as we all know that water makes us feel calm. The only worries you will have is to choose between the infinity pool right in front of Sunset Bistro or the big adult and children's pools centered between the suites and main hotel building. Cindy or one

Radisson **BLU**
ARUBA



of her colleagues from the Acqua Breeze Pool Bar welcome you with a big smile and Caribbean flair.

That Blu thing

To say it all in a nutshell: this resort has a special something to it, you feel the difference in the attention, the design, the details and the space. To find out for yourself, you need to dive into the experience and most probably you will say like we do: it's a Blu thing. ☐

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Matividiri 60, Before the gold mine ruins on the road to natural bridge.

As part of the AAA Wings of Hope's Education goal: 252 students receive school assistance for back-to-school 2021

ORANJESTAD - Aruba Airport Authority N.V.'s (AAA) "Wings of Hope" (WoH) proudly donated a total of 175 school supplies and uniform vouchers to the Directorate of Social Affairs (DSZ) on Tuesday, August 3rd, 2021.

WoH's goals are based on five Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs): Hunger, Education, Affordable and Clean Energy, Environment/Sustainable Airport Community, and Partnership. As part of WoH's education goal, which includes two parts, a total of 175 students received assistance with their school materials and uniforms, and a total of 77 students will receive help with their school year fee.



During the handover of the school supplies and uniform vouchers to DSZ by the WoH workgroup and AAA colleagues, AAA's Director Health, Safety and Sustainability, and WoH leader Mrs. Angeline Flemming expressed her utmost gratitude towards DSZ for their continuous efforts and dedication to the community of Aruba.

The assistance of DSZ is crucial to WoH. "For AAA, it is an honor to be able to assist especially the children, to help them succeed in their studies, despite their challenging circumstances. We hope we can also inspire some of these young minds to consider a future career in Aviation, said Mrs. Angeline Flemming. □

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For today's newspaper we received a great message and picture from Allison Braswell from Boston. She wrote: "Aruba to me is home away from home and family. This was my third visit this year and this visit was just to relax in which we did. As always the Tamarijn Staff was absolutely amazing. I have become friends with so many over the years and consider them all my friends and fam-

ily. We have also met other wonderful friends on the island who we have become great friends with and beautiful exotic bully dogs who we have become great friends with family of them. They are always so helpful and always there for you no matter what. So another beautiful trip in the books and there will many more. Thank you Aruba and to all my friends. Miss you all". □

Millennial Money: How to handle mixed-income friendships

By **LAURA MCMULLEN** of **NerdWallet**

Finally, as the country re-opens, you're likely seeing more of your friends. Out with the video chatting and in with the high-fiving, hugging and, well, spending.

For every dinner, there's a check to pay; for every wedding, a gift to buy; and for every concert, a ticket to score.

You may notice that you and your reunited friends handle these kinds of expenses differently. Maybe one of you sees an \$80 night out as chump change, while the other feels like a chump for desperately needing that cash for rent.

Here's how to reenter the world of socializing and spending while keeping friendships and finances intact.

IF YOU'RE THE FRIEND WITH LESS MONEY

Reflect on your finances and priorities, as well as how they may have changed during the pandemic.

"This is an opportunity for everyone to be more mindful about where they want to spend their time, money and resources," says Kathleen Burns Kingsbury, a Waitsfield, Vermont-based



In this April 16, 2021 file photo, patrons are assisted while dining along a sidewalk in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Associated Press

wealth psychology expert and host of the "Breaking Money Silence" podcast. Consider what's important to you, she says, as well as the experiences you want to invest in and those you'd rather skip to save money. "Then you can decline invitations a little easier because you feel more solid in your decision," she says. Say you realize that during quarantine you didn't mind PB&J for most meals, but you craved live music. Skip the fancy dinner plans and,

if your finances allow, buy the concert ticket.

Or make your own plans if you're simply longing to catch up with friends. Host a potluck, movie night, bike ride or another more affordable hangout.

With this kind of intention, you're empowering yourself to make strategic financial decisions. Doesn't that sound better than bailing because money is tight?

As Kingsbury puts it: "Instead of saying, 'I can't, I can't, I can't,' it's more about say-

ing, 'This is what I'm going to do.'"

As you reflect on financial priorities, consider creating a budget to match them, says New York-based financial therapist Aja Evans.

A budget is a plan for your incoming and outgoing money — though you can call it something else if the B-word wigs you out. (Evans calls her family budget their "killing-it plan.")

The key word is "plan." No need to resort to a shrug or stress-fest when you're

invited to a destination wedding or pricey brunch. With a budget, you already have an idea of how much you can (or can't) spend on those activities.

If you can't swing the event, trust that your friends will understand. "I would imagine that, after COVID, people really understand financial stress no matter their level of income or assets," Kingsbury says.

IF YOU'RE THE FRIEND WITH MORE MONEY

If you can afford the dinners and concerts, then live it up, Evans says. But try to understand that your friends can't always join you.

Be "empathetic and compassionate and — here's the hard part — not judgmental," Kingsbury says.

You may not know your friend's circumstances. Many people don't share when they're financially stressed, Kingsbury says, "because there's that judgment and shame." So give your friend the benefit of the doubt when she declines an invite.

And give your friend something else: time. As soon as you plan an outing or learn about a pricey event, tell them so they can try to plan for it, Evans says. □

Target to offer debt-free education to front-line workers



A sign at a Target store is pictured Thursday, June 24, 2021, in Oklahoma City.

Associated Press

By **ANNE D'INNOCENZIO**
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Target Corp. is joining a growing list of retailers and restaurant chains offering edu-

cational assistance at select online institutions for its front-line employees in a fiercely competitive job market.

The Minneapolis-based

discounter said Wednesday that it plans to spend \$200 million over the next four years to offer its workers free undergraduate and associate degree programs as well as certificates in business-oriented majors at select institutions such as University of Arizona and University of Denver. Textbooks will also be free.

Like a slew of other big corporate names like Walmart, Taco Bell and the Walt Disney Co., Target is teaming up with Guild Education, a Denver startup that negotiates deals between companies and colleges for the program. Target says it's offering one of the most comprehensive programs. Target's program will be available this fall for more

than 340,000 U.S.-based part-time and full-time students. Workers, including those on the first day on the job, can attend classes at more than 40 schools, colleges and universities. They can choose from 250 business programs like computer science, operations and business management.

For those interested in pursuing educational opportunities outside of the select programs within Guild, Target says it will provide direct payments to their academic institutions of up to \$5,250 for non-master's degrees and up to \$10,000 for master's degrees each year.

"A significant number of our hourly team members build their careers at Target, and

we know many would like to pursue additional education opportunities," said Melissa Kremer, chief human resources officer at Target in a statement. "We don't want the cost to be a barrier for anyone."

Target's move follows an announcement last month by Walmart that it will cover the full cost of tuition and books for its 1.5 million part-time and full-time Walmart and Sam's Club workers in the U.S. through its Live Better U program. The nation's largest retailer and private employer previously charged employees \$1 a day to participate. It said it will invest nearly \$1 billion over the next five years in career-driven training and development. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 43 Espresso

1 Hotel desk order

fixture 44 More

5 Viking rational

of the 45 Tart fruits

comics 46 Liquefy

10 Benefit

12 Speculate

13 Positive-

thinking

14 Some

turns

15 Strange

16 Try for a

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18 Get snug

20 Stiller of

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21 Helps out

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26 Price

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40 Like

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Yesterday's answer

DOWN

1 Burger

topper

2 Stay

clear of

3 Comes to

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4 Pot topper

5 Bagel

feature

6 Galoots

7 Wrapping

paper

alternative

8 Stag's

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9 Bristle at

11 Blighter

17 Cardinal

19 Paving goo

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25 Author

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8-5

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-5

CRYPTOQUOTE

CLIZ LQ WJ GOBD ZL YD

ZPOKJXMOKZDS, MVAD O

ZPDD, YDQLPD TD YMLJJLC.

— MLWVJD KDBDMJLK

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: DON'T SIT DOWN AND WAIT FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES TO COME. GET UP AND MAKE THEM! — MADAM C.J. WALKER



In this Thursday, July 15, 2021, file photo, a regional train in the flood waters at the local station in Kordel, Germany, after it was flooded by the high waters of the Kyll river.

Associated Press

This year's summer of climate extremes hits wealthier places

Associated Press

As the world staggers through another summer of extreme weather, experts are noticing something different: 2021's onslaught is hitting harder and in places that have been spared global warming's wrath in the past.

Wealthy countries such as the United States, Canada, Germany and Belgium are joining poorer and more vulnerable nations on a growing list of extreme weather events that scientists say have some connection to human-caused climate change.

"It is not only a poor country problem, it's now very obviously a rich country problem," said Debby Guha-Sapir, founder of the international disaster database at the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. "They (the rich) are getting whacked."

Killer floods hit China, but hundreds of people also drowned in parts of Germany and Belgium not used to being inundated. Canada and the Pacific Northwest of the U.S. had what climate scientist Zeke Hausfather called "scary" heat that soared well past triple digits in Fahrenheit and into the high 40s in Celsius, shattering records and accompanied by unusual wildfires. Now southern

Europe is seeing unprecedented heat and fire.

And peak Atlantic hurricane and U.S. wildfire seasons are only just starting. When what would become Hurricane Elsa formed on July 1, it broke last year's record for the earliest fifth named Atlantic storm. Colorado State University has already increased its forecast for the number of named Atlantic storms — and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Wednesday said it was expecting one or two named storms more than it predicted in May.

For fire season, the U.S. West is the driest it has been since 1580, based on soil moisture readings and tree ring records, setting the stage for worsening fires if something ignites them, said UCLA climate and fire scientist Park Williams. What happens with U.S. hurricane and fire seasons drives the end-of-year statistics for total damage costs of weather disasters, said Ernst Rauch, chief climate and geo scientist for insurance giant Munich Re. But so far this year, he said, wealthier regions have seen the biggest economic losses.

But when poorer countries are hit, they are less prepared and their people can't use air conditioning or leave so there's more harm, said Hausfather, climate di-

rector of the Breakthrough Institute. While hundreds of people died in the Pacific Northwest heat wave, he said the number would have been much higher in poor areas.

Madagascar, an island nation off East Africa, is in the middle of back-to-back droughts that the United Nations warns are pushing 400,000 people toward starvation.

Though it is too early to say the summer of 2021 will again break records for climate disasters, "We're certainly starting to see climate change push extreme events into new territories where they haven't been seen before," Hausfather said.

The number of weather, water and climate disasters so far this year is only slightly higher than the average of recent years, said disaster researcher Guha-Sapir. Her group's database, which she said still is missing quite a few events, shows 208 such disasters worldwide through July — about 11% more than the last decade's average, but a bit less than last year.

Last year, the record-shattering heat that came out of nowhere was in Siberia, where few people live, but this year it struck Portland, Oregon, and British Columbia, which gets more Western media attention, Hausfather said. □

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In 'Annette,' an eccentric, tortured pop opera

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

"Annette" is a film that's likely best experienced rather than described. Anyone familiar with the work of French director Leos Carax, best known for the surreal Denis Lavant fantasy "Holy Motors," probably already knew that. But tack on the fact that the script and music was written by Sparks duo Ron and Russell Mael, known for their sophisticated, theatrical and irreverent songs, and "Annette," starring Adam Driver and Marion Cotillard, adds up to something that defies explanation. This post-modern pop opera is wildly unique, often maddening and sometimes even illuminating. Oh, and there's a little wooden puppet baby who can sing, but we'll get to that later. While I can't say I have anything resembling a grasp on "Annette" or that I even enjoyed most of the journey, it's also something that has lingered. And the more distance I have from "Annette," the more I admire its unabashedly grand oddness.



This image released by Amazon Studios shows Adam Driver, left, and Marion Cotillard in a scene from "Annette."

Associated Press

The Los Angeles-set story is centered on an artistic couple and their passionate, volatile relationship. Driver is Henry McHenry, a caustic and provocative stand-up and performance artist in a green boxer's robe, who, despite his intellectual superiority and disdain for most everything, does seem to have a loyal

fan base who genuinely enjoys his hostile comedy. And he does like one thing, it turns out: Cotillard's Ann Defrasnoux, an opera singer who he's recently started dating. They're a mismatched pair. She is grace, saving her audience every night. He's the devil who kills his. But they're in love and in

lust and together they become a media sensation on par with Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, whose every move is covered by the winkingly cheap Showbiz News. And soon, they've welcomed a child, baby Annette, who has large ears and a wooden frame. Yet for all her artificiality, baby Annette is also

disarmingly infant-like in her movements. And baby Annette has an extraordinary talent that manifests after a tragic night on a boat. There's another character, too — maybe the only truly likable character — in Simon Helberg's funny and heartsick accompanist-turned-conductor who provides some reliable levity amid all the tumult. Even though Cotillard (magnificent, as always) is certainly the co-lead, this is very much Driver's show and he is breathtaking. Is there a more disarming actor working today? Here he fully embraces his animalistic physicality to create an imposing and dangerous character who you can only really love when seen through Ann's eyes. This becomes a bit of a problem later on for reasons I won't get into, but even if you don't like Henry McHenry, you can't take your eyes off of him. "Annette" is mostly sung, by the way. And although the music doesn't sound like an opera, its spirit more closely resembles that form than a musical. □

Grammys commit to more hiring diversity for 2022 show



In this Oct. 10, 2017, file photo, various Grammy Awards are displayed at the Grammy Museum Experience at Prudential Center in Newark, N.J.

Associated Press

By **JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.**
AP Entertainment Writer
LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Grammy Awards will adopt an inclusion rider that will require producers to recruit and hire more diverse candidates backstage and in front of the camera for next

year's ceremony. The Recording Academy announced Wednesday that the rider will be added to its agreement with producers staging the 64th annual awards as a way to ensure equity and inclusion at all levels of production.

Academy President and CEO Harvey Mason Jr. called the concept a "monumental step" for an inclusive music community. The full inclusion rider will be released publicly on Sept. 16. The rider requires Grammys producers to audition, interview, and hire onstage and offstage people who have been historically and systematically excluded from the industry. "As the academy continues its transformational journey, diversifying our industry is at the core of every decision we make," Mason said in a statement. "We're dedicated to fostering an environment of inclusion industry wide and hope that our efforts set an example for our peers in the music community." The academy's initiative was created in partnership

with several groups including the Color of Change, inclusion rider co-authors Kalpana Kotagal and Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni, and Ryan Butler, the founding director of Warner Music/Blavatnik Center for Music Business at Howard University. "There are a lot of unwritten rules in the entertainment industry that create racial exclusion, and at Color Of Change, we know that to change society you have to change the rules," said Rashad Robinson, president of the organization. "This inclusion rider is a written rule that will change the culture of hiring at the Grammys, and will make inclusion the norm." Kotagal said incorporating the concept into the awards show will have an enormous impact on an industry that has a long his-

tory of "exclusion and underrepresentation." "Part of what makes the inclusion rider so potent is its adaptability," said Kotagal, who is a civil rights attorney. She added that the inclusion rider for the Grammys will include a commitment to "deepening and diversifying hiring pools, setting benchmarks and targets for hiring, collecting and thoroughly analyzing applicant and hiring data and implementing accountability measures." The term "inclusion rider" was brought into the spotlight in 2018 when Frances McDormand mentioned it during her best actress Oscar acceptance speech. Michael B. Jordan, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Paul Feig and Warner Bros. followed suit by pledging to use inclusion riders in their production projects. □

MLB season starts March 31, again with every team scheduled

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball will open the 2022 season on March 31 — as long as there isn't a work stoppage — and will try for the fourth time to have every team play its first game on the same day for the first time since 1968. The league released the full schedule on Wednesday. NL openers have the Chicago Cubs at Cincinnati, Colorado at the Los Angeles Dodgers, Atlanta at Miami, Arizona at Milwaukee, Washington at the New York Mets, St. Louis at Pittsburgh and San Francisco at San Diego.

AL openers are Toronto at Baltimore, Tampa Bay at Boston, Minnesota at the Chicago White Sox, Kansas City at Cleveland, the Los Angeles Angels at Oakland, Detroit at Seattle and the New York Yankees at Texas.

In the one interleague opener, Philadelphia is at Houston.

The collective bargaining agreement between MLB and the players' association expires Dec. 1. Given the acrimonious relationship between the sides, a lockout or strike appears possible. Baseball has not had a work stoppage since a 7 1/2-month strike in 1994-95 that caused the first cancellation of the World Series in 90 years.

MLB tried to have all 30 clubs play on the same opening day for three of the past four seasons. Pittsburgh at Detroit and Washington at Cincinnati were rained out in 2018.

For 2019, Seattle and Oakland started ahead of other teams with a two-game series in Tokyo. The start of the 2020 season was delayed to July 23 due to the pandemic, and the only game on opening night had the Yankees at Washington.

When MLB tried again this year, the Mets' game in Washington — a prime pitching matchup between Jacob deGrom and Max Scherzer — was postponed because of a COVID-19 outbreak. Baltimore's game at Boston was postponed because rain was in the forecast.



Los Angeles Angels' Shohei Ohtani sprints around third on his way home to score on a Phil Gosselin single in the fifth inning of a baseball game against the Texas Rangers in Arlington, Texas, Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021.

Home openers for teams opening on the road start April 4, when the Royals host the White Sox, the Blue Jays host the Rays, the Cubs host the Cardinals and the Nationals host the Phillies.

April 7 home openers have the Yankees host the Red Sox, the Angels host the Astros, the Twins host the Mariners, the Diamondbacks host the Padres, the Cardinals host the Pirates and the Braves host the Reds.

Remaining home openers are April 8, with the Tigers home against the White Sox, the Rays home against the Orioles, the Phillies home against the Athletics, the Rockies home against the Dodgers and the Giants home against the Marlins. □

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Kids and cars: Today's teens in no rush to start driving

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Michael Andretti has a 21-year-old son with zero interest in obtaining a driver's license. Rideshare apps get him where he wants to go. In New Jersey, the 16-year-old daughter of a local short track racer took a five-minute driving lesson on a golf cart through their yard before turning over the keys. "That's it, I'm done. Don't like it," Kat Wilson told their father.

The teenage rite of passage of rushing to the DMV on your birthday to get that plastic card that represents freedom has changed dramatically over the last 30 years. Data collected from the Federal Highway Administration and analyzed by Green Car Congress showed that in 2018 approximately 61% of 18-year-olds in the U.S. had a driver's license, down from 80% percent in 1983. The number of 16-year-olds with licenses decreased from 46% to 25% in the same period.

The trend that began with millennials has been amplified by Generation Z, with teens citing myriad reasons for putting off or avoiding getting a driver license. Some prefer more environmentally friendly transportation options, some found driving too stressful and some just don't care about cars.

The pandemic closed New York state motor vehicle offices, but Ian Hoffman said he had his permit but could take the train into



This August 2020 photo shows Cole Kleis standing next to a 1932 Ford Coup in front of a garage of old cars he's been restoring with his family in Napa, Calif.

Associated Press

the city when needed. He's headed this fall to his freshman year at the University of Miami with no pressing need to legally formalize his ability to drive. In suburban Boston, high school senior Celeste Robinson has relied on friends with cars or public transportation.

"There is the question of independence, at least that's what I'm told all the time," Robinson said. "But I'm an anxious person and driving does seem intimidating to me. I've tried it and it just feels very hard. And I do love public transportation, so I plan things very much in advance and make sure I can get a train there."

Although market research firm J.D. Power found that millennials accounted for 32% of new car sales in 2020, higher than any other age group and ahead of baby boomers for the first time, Gen Z is content waiting for wheels.

"I hate cars, I don't trust people driving them, especially in New Jersey, and I see a lot of accidents and

it's scary. When someone pulls into our lane, maybe from a parking lot, I just automatically tense up," said Kat Wilson, who never caught the motorsports bug despite father Donnie Wilson regularly racing local short tracks.

It's a conundrum facing the automobile industry as car-makers look to make their vehicles appealing to tomorrow's drivers. Kat Wilson can't differentiate a Toyota Camry from a Chevrolet Malibu or Honda Accord, which are all among the top-selling sedans in the country. On the flipside, Hoffman has an eye for luxury high-performance vehicles.

"I'll see a Lamborghini or a really nice Mercedes or a Bentley and stop — 'Oh, wow, that's a really cool car,'" Hoffman said. "I can appreciate a nice car and recognize the difference between a nice car and a crappy car, but if somebody asked me if I was a car guy, I wouldn't say yes." The automakers are ad-

ressing the issue with the obvious — a generation raised on technology likely will be most interested in cars with the newest features and connectivity.

Ford's flagship muscle car has always been the Mustang and now the company offers an electric version Mach E equipped with a 15.5-inch touchscreen display that combines cloud-based connectivity, over-the-air update capabilities and enhanced voice recognition. A "Drive Experience" feature allows the operator to set the interior sound, lighting, responsiveness to one of three moods: Unbridled, Engage or Whisper.

"A big screen" is what teen drivers want, said Mark Rushbrook, global director of Ford Performance Motorsports.

"I think what is important to them is staying connected in a safe way," Rushbrook said. "The vehicle is an extension of their iPhone or their screen device, they want to stay connected and bring their music and everything else with them into the car."

Mark Reuss, president of General Motors, said he believes there is still a market for teens who care about more than just Apple CarPlay and USB ports.

"You still have to deliver connectivity in something people love to look at and be seen in," Reuss said. "That generation has not been lost. They still want a great looking car, great looking interior and have fun driving it, and I don't care if it's a turbo-charged three cylinder (fuel efficient car) or a 660 horsepower blown LT4 (high-performance vehicle)."

"Driving a fun car doesn't have to be the most expensive, most powerful car. There's lots of different ways to make cars appealing and that doesn't go away." Veteran NASCAR driver Ryan Newman is a self-professed "car guy" with a nearly 10,000-square foot garage full of classic cars, including one of only eight 1957 Custom Royal Lancer Super D500s built

by Dodge. He learns everything he can about his cars, refurbishes them back into drivable condition and knows exactly what's under the hood.

Newman believes kids can learn to love cars the way he did if adults just showed them how.

"Get them involved, cars aren't at their fingertips in real life," Newman said. "God gave us our senses to go out and enjoy them and just by enjoying them on a video game is not the right way to do it."

Cole Kleis, 20, of Napa, California. Kleis attends Colorado State University at Pueblo, majoring in automotive industry management. He took his first job in a dealership at age 12 cleaning cars, sweeping floors and helping in the parts department.

Kleis was given more responsibility over the years and used his time to learn as much as he could. He can change a transmission, replace an alternator, diagnose the weird sounds and, in his free time, he is restoring a 1938 Packard Six initially purchased brand new by his great-grandparents. "I grew up with old cars and love just about every type," said Kleis, who aims to one day run his own car dealerships.

The key for the auto industry is to not only identify gearheads such as Kleis, but also build cars that entice his peers to get their license and start driving. There's a large portion of Gen Z that has wishes and wants in a car that automakers never before had to consider.

"The only things that I occasionally look into are the advances in the electronics, the really new stuff," said Robinson, the Boston high school student. "A lot of the brands are pretty standardized anymore in terms of safety, so I'm not really concerned about 'Oh, will my car break down?' For me, it is ultimately going to be about 'Do I think this car is pretty? Is it in my price range?' and for someone like me, 'Is it electric? Is it hybrid? Will it affect the universe?'"

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